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The Playground



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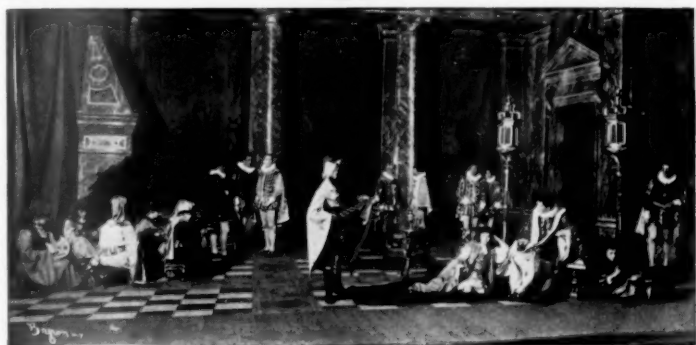
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GETTING READY FOR THE EXHIBIT

THE RURAL WORLD AT PLAY

When recreation workers first began to study the question of play for rural communities, most of them were more impressed by the dearth of opportunities than by anything else. A surprisingly large space in all the early reports and discussions is given to the hopeless condition. However, this has proved the proverbial silver-lined cloud for, considering of the newness of this investigation, a surprisingly large number of successful experiments has been reported, while live practicable suggestions for future developments have been made on all sides.

Much has been done. What can be regarded as of general suggestiveness? Given the most hopeless situation of monotony and discontent, what can the worker do to bring beauty and joy from the ashes?

For the children a playground must be established—even with home-made apparatus. Doll play and play with pets must not be forgotten for the younger children. For indoor play, there are scores of fascinating things for little fingers—cutting, folding, pasting, scrap-books, dissected maps, soap-bubbles, clay and putty for modeling, bean-bags, tops, marbles. Then how about clubs for the boys and girls, and for the young people and adults? Sewing clubs, embroidery clubs, "pretty things" clubs—cooking, stencilling, nature-study, tomato clubs for the girls and women; manual-training classes, collection clubs, corn and potato clubs for the boys and men; all these are possible besides the outdoor activities for summer and winter, such as swimming, boating, fishing, skating, snow-shoeing, tramping and baseball, football, volley ball, tennis, croquet.

Then there is storytelling for old and young in clubs or informal groups. Dramatic clubs have a perennial interest. Lecture and entertainment courses, reading circles, a choral union—just the old-fashioned singing school—spelling matches, barn dances, "quiltings"—these may have a place today as of yore. Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Knights of King Arthur, summer camps, walking tours of several days may be organized. Archery has proved great sport for young women in many places, while basket ball, folk dancing and the ever-popular social dancing always appeal.

Nothing will more surely rouse the spirit of play and of help-

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ful co-operation than a town pageant. A county play-day and field day, for which full directions are given by Dr. Scudder in *THE PLAYGROUND* for March, 1913, and which is illustrated by the *Amenia Field Day* and Mr. Settle's account of *Virginia School Fairs* is something to look forward to from year to year.

Of course the first problem for all these activities is a good leader. It is to be hoped that eventually every rural community will have its own recreation secretary. Until that happy day, the minister, the school teacher, the Y. M. C. A. secretary, the librarian must rise to this opportunity—and abundant evidence that each has done so may be found. As to place, also, it is hoped that a town square with play fields of all sorts for summer and a cozy and comfortable building for winter will be an assured town asset. Meantime, the church, the school, the library, a rented store-room, or even house-to-house meetings must supply the need. A game and reading room on the main street like that noted later will never lack patronage.

But the great thing is to start—and having started, never stop. No single community can do all these things in any one year but every community can provide a measure of wise and happy use of leisure time for every man, woman and child in the community and the outlying country.

The Morris Memorial building in Chatham, New York, was erected at a cost of about \$50,000 in an endeavor to work out the rural recreation problem. The building is equipped with a 40 x 60 gymnasium, shower baths, bowling alleys, pool and billiard rooms; reading, social, game and class rooms.

Among the activities are: gymnasium classes for boys, men, women and girls; athletic meets; baseball, basket ball and bowling teams; entertainments, lectures, Boy Scouts; Village Improvement Association; and various clubs; later playground and school garden work was added.

Although the town has a population of but 2300, the first year was closed with 525 members.

"Booster Day" Gouverneur, New York, celebrated a "Booster Day," on which all the merchants reduced the price of the wares in the stores, and the children were given a good time while the parents laid in supplies. A large chorus of children sang patriotic songs, others performed folk dances or joined in a great parade around the square, in which marched the

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Boy Scouts and the Knights of King Arthur, followed by beautiful floats representing Indians, Puritans, and early settlers, and, at last, "Enterprise."

In a small mill village of five hundred people, several miles removed from train and trolley, young people complained that when not working in the mill, "There is nothing to do in this town." A middle-aged, uneducated woman of somewhat remarkable native ability and understanding formed the habit of inviting to her house on Saturday evenings ten or twelve young men and women to play simple games. She and her husband possessed the instincts of hospitality and their Saturday evenings became popular and could scarcely help being a positive social force for good. A friend, realizing the financial strain of this small entertainment upon the hostess, asked her to accept a sum of money to pay for refreshments in connection with these parties, which could thus be held with more frequency.

Andrew C. Zabriskie, of Dutchess County, New York, has not only helped in the remarkable Y. M. C. A. work in that county, but has for many years maintained a public reading room, a drum, fife, and bugle corps, and has devoted a field upon his property to football and baseball.

The program for the Farmers' Picnic in Oak Grove, Livingston County, Michigan, for July Fourth consisted of a shooting match, program of music and recitations, potato race, wheelbarrow race, sack race, use of swings, and croquet games, followed by dinner (provided by the various families) and fire works in the evening.

A Model Trolley Park

Mr. Samuel Sneath, who is sole owner of an inter-urban road that runs between Tiffin and Fostoria, Ohio, has for ten years maintained a seven-acre recreation center called "Meadowbrook Park," lying on his trolley line outside the city limits. In this park is a large pavilion with dancing hall, kitchen and dining room. The grounds which were beautifully laid out by expert landscape architects, have been equipped with steel apparatus—swings, cross bars, flying rings, giant stride, slides, volley ball, sand piles, and other apparatus. Besides this equipment are tennis courts, with lockers and shower baths. The park has a caretaker in charge from early morning until the cars stop running in the evening, and from the first of June until the last of September a college graduate acts

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as director. It is open in winter as well as in summer, the pavilion being steam-heated and lighted with electricity. The park has become exceedingly popular as a meeting place for family reunions. There have frequently been as many as 300 of one family connection at the gatherings. The tennis tournaments held there in summer make it very popular. The public has free use of all the recreational facilities of the center, with the exception of the tennis courts—the railroad bearing all other expenses.

In 1910, in addition to the inter-urban lines, the city lines were acquired by Mr. Sneath, and with them a beautiful park of thirty acres adjoining the city limits. Since that time large sums have been expended in building an open-air dancing pavilion, a fine athletic field, lagoons, swimming pool, wading pool and children's playground. League games of baseball and football are played there; there is dancing throughout the summer months, tennis, swimming and boating. There is a caretaker in charge all the year round; there is a small charge for games, swimming and boating, but entrance to the park is absolutely free. All of this work is carried on by one small corporation, controlled by one person.

A Tribute

Thirty-seven acres of wooded highland cutting into the Long Sault Rapids of the Saint Lawrence River were presented to the Municipality of Cornwall about six miles distant, as a tribute to his parents by L. A. Ault, of Cincinnati, Ohio. Mr. Ault's native village, Mille Roches, is situated near the foot of the Rapids and the situation is considered unusually romantic and beautiful.

Mr. Ault had previously given 150 acres of beautiful park property overlooking the Ohio and Miami valleys to the city of Cincinnati.

The Schools Are Helping

Many rural schools are assuming responsibility for community recreation, to the benefit of the school itself as well as of the neighborhood. The State Normal School of Kansas has recognized that this function often falls to the schools by issuing a folder containing suggestions for a rural school game contest. A typical contest for the county in which the Normal School is located was held upon the school athletic field.

The Right of Our Children's Children

Superintendent of Schools, J. T. Scully, of Arlington, Massachusetts, gives some very striking testimony regarding the influence of

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the playgrounds on the morals of the boys using them. When the grounds were first opened a good deal of objectionable language was heard. The high school boys were appealed to to assist in eliminating profanity, vulgarity (and smoking)—with immediate results. Nothing of the kind is now heard on the grounds. A woman living near the swimming hole frequented by Arlington boys has remarked on the absence of profanity. The influence of the playground has engendered a sentiment which will not tolerate practices which were once common. One of the citizens of Arlington is aroused over the fact that much of the open land is taken up by speculators. He evoked much applause by saying: "Boston is traveling this way with rapid strides. Much of our land is in the hands of speculative operators—more will be. Let us by all means get hold of some of this land before those seize it who have not the tenth of the right to it that our children and our children's children have."

A Community Asset

Senator Frank H. Funk, of Illinois, gave three acres of farm land near Bloomington and secured the co-operation of several school districts in the construction of a union school, in which cooking, manual training, and agriculture are taught. The assembly room seating 250 is a community asset, where the best of the social gatherings and club meetings are held.

A Clover Blossom a Year!

A school board in Flint, Michigan, has rented a site for a school building for ninety-nine years at the rate of one clover blossom a year. What a suggestion for arousing interest for school yards made and kept beautiful by children's hands!

"For a jolly good book Whereon to look Is better to me than gold."

The Brumback Library of Van Wert County, Ohio, in its years of service, has co-operated with Farmers' Institutes, Agricultural Clubs, Boys' Corn Clubs, and Teachers' Associations. During one year, 73,620 volumes were circulated in a population of 29,119. The central library maintains fifteen stations, in post offices, stores, or other accessible places, where from one hundred to three hundred books, in addition to special requests, are sent at a time, and exchanged every three months. Besides this, libraries are maintained in ninety out of the one hundred and fifteen rural schools in the county. Books from these are exchanged as often

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as the teacher wishes. It is hoped that soon reading rooms will supplant the deposit stations and a book automobile will make possible a house to house visitation, on the plan successfully carried out in Washington County, Maryland.

Co-operating with the schools, or, in many instances, preceding them in developing rural recreation are the churches and Young Men's Christian Associations. The work in Windsor County, Vermont, has been noted in *THE PLAYGROUND* a number of times. In Spring Valley, New York, the county Y. M. C. A. secretary acts as executive secretary of the public schools athletic league. Besides football, baseball and basket ball contests, cross country runs are held in the fall, and an all-day field and track meet for both grammar and high schools in the spring. A delightful summer camp given by a wealthy citizen, and agricultural and horticultural contests are arranged for the boys of Three Rivers, Michigan, through the Y. M. C. A. work. The Association has also helped to create and maintain support for a summer chautauqua. A play day at the county fair, a camp and football and baseball are among the activities of the county association in Tracy, Minnesota. In north-eastern Colorado an inter-scholastic track and field meet was promoted by the county Christian Associations and proving a great success, was taken up and carried by the schools themselves. Oratorical, dramatic reading, and musical contests are held in connection with the field meet and to these contests high school girls also are eligible. A proportionate banner is offered to the school securing the greatest number of points in proportion to the number of students enrolled. Palisade, Colorado, on the Western Slope, has tried to develop education and recreation hand in hand. The principals of the schools have invited the national workers of the Y. M. C. A. to visit them and give assistance to them in their athletic work. They have started boy scout activities, as well as periodical hikes and mountain climbs for both boys and girls. Of course these are but gleanings but they serve to indicate what a tremendous force recreation may be in the hands of those institutions which are already leading rural communities.

A Dormant Power

It is well that some reports are encouraging for occasionally comes in a statement, like that of the N Y. Baptist Convention, which shows how many churches have not as yet accepted this new social duty.

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Out of forty-one rural churches asked what organizations of the church contribute to the education or vocational life of the community, thirty-six gave no answer, one says little is done, one names Boy Scouts, one the Y. M. C. A., one the government union, one the fire company. In reply to the question, "What efforts, other than religious, does your church make for community betterment?" twenty-nine give no answer, two answer none, two socials, one band concerts, one temperance and library work, one "little," one stereopticon lecture, one "general support," one special entertainments, one lecture course.

Fraternal organizations are reported in all but seven communities, varying from one to ten in number. Twenty-one regard fraternal organizations as a hindrance, fifteen consider them questionable. One regards them as a help. In answer to the question, not one church reported definite co-operation between church and other social organizations. The church was used for school functions in one instance.

Sometimes, even, comes word from a minister that recreation is no proper function or associate of the church, and, if young people are occupied in truly Christian religion, they will not need to seek strange gods afar off nor through the churches!

Recreation through a Sunday School Association

In courageous opposition to such a view, Mr. Fred Washburn, the State rural work superintendent of the Michigan Sunday School Association, says: "The rural church can and should be the social center of the community and provide the necessary social life for its young people if we expect to keep our young people under the right social and religious influences." During the year and a half in which this Association has been organized, rural work superintendents have been appointed in twenty-one counties of the State.

In one county a county Sunday School Athletic Association has been organized and in the various townships of this county various lines of athletics will be taken up. All the activities of the athletic association are under the direction of Christian men, and of course, take place on week-days. At a county field day in August the various township organizations participate in field amusements and games. In a number of the counties a boys' camp is conducted for a week or two for the Sunday school boys.

The first rural institutional church in Maroa, Illinois, con-

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tains a rest room, reading room, library, gymnasium, and auditorium. The pastor's suggestion for such a building was followed by the gift of a lot and a subscription of \$10,000 within twenty days. In thirty days arrangements for building were completed.

Among the Green Mountains of New England the social center of a certain community was a parish house, locally known as the Ladies' Aid Hall. There was the home of the grange, the Good Templars' Lodge, the Grand Army Post, church and community socials, stereopticon lectures, the village library, the church prayer and business meetings, election day, Christmas sales and suppers, the smaller village lectures and theatricals, boys' club meetings, and entertainments by local and visiting Masons and Odd Fellows.

In Randolph, Vermont, there is an excellent music hall and parish house called the Chandler Music Hall. For nearly six years this has been the social and entertainment center not only of the large village, but of the surrounding country. The old village hall where all sorts of shows took place has been abandoned for amusement purposes for the church social center, where not only boys', men's and girls' clubs have their home with the use of gymnasium, bowling alley, bathroom, dining room and large public hall, but where the pastor and his committees select the best modern dramas and operas to be presented.

The pastor of a country church in Wisconsin, once a half-back on the Wisconsin University team, has a football team among his young men and coaches them himself.

In the village of Redwood Falls, Minnesota, there is a church which has three boys' clubs which are Sunday School classes on Sunday and baseball, hockey and skiing teams during the week. One of these classes numbers twenty-four and is led by the motion picture show proprietor of the town. These classes have monthly socials and weekly club meetings.

A Catholic priest in Indiana recently bought an abandoned Protestant Church and has turned it into a recreation hall.

It is the unanimous testimony of churches that are trying to offer uncommercialized recreation to their communities that the results have been gratifying to the communities and to the churches. Of the seventy-six churches in Boone County, Indiana, which offer recreation, either commercial or otherwise, sixty-five percent are growing, while only twelve percent of the churches

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which do not offer it are growing. In three counties of the same state it was found that of the 256 churches that were opposed to recreation, only one was growing. Two-thirds of them were losing ground, the rest barely holding their own.

Looking Out for the Girls

The rural Young Women's Christian Associations are striving to meet the cry of the girls for good times in their own village or district, which shall yet redound to the welfare of the community. Among the recreational activities conducted are the following:

Contests in the schools or grange or county fairs in bread-making, butter-making, the best menus for threshers with recipes given, a model kitchen, darning, patching, hand and machine sewing, and even in seed-corn germination—all of these have helped to make the country girl get at the best way of doing things, finding even in her work that play spirit which takes away the drudgery.

A Social Service League

The five villages which make up Salisbury organized a Social Service League and engaged a social worker. Sewing and cooking classes, a travel club which "toured" Europe, two groups of Camp Fire Girls, two folk-dancing classes, and a "Pretty Things Class" were organized. One day each month an entertainment was given in the library in which everyone could take part in dancing, guessing games, or simple plays. Gardens were established for the children and "home project" cards given out for the summer on which was recorded each day some self-imposed task, such as making a bed, setting the table. These cards were signed by the mother and exhibited at the grange fair.

Page County, Iowa, maintained a camp for boys and girls for ten days at the same time of the Chautauqua. Each camper paid seven dollars, receiving tent, cot, meals, class instruction and season Chautauqua ticket. The boys' and girls' camps were a quarter of a mile apart, with common dining tent and a governing body, the House of Representatives, with one delegate from each tent. In the morning the boys studied animal husbandry, corn-judging and alfalfa growing, while the girls were taught cooking, sewing, personal hygiene and home decoration. One hour was devoted by boys and girls together in tying knots, making rope halters, bandaging. The afternoons and evenings were given up to organized play and to attending the Chautauqua lectures.

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A Juvenile

Farmer's Institute

At the close of the camp, a farmers' institute and "colt show" was given, for which the boys and girls had their own officers, planned their program, solicited prizes and did their own advertising. The girls' part included a demonstration of the points to be considered in judging bread; how to make a bed—a demonstration and explanation of how and why it was done thus; a demonstration of bandaging, with explanation of method and reasons; and a lesson in sewing. The boys showed how to hang seed corn; judged a colt and a dairy cow, giving the points considered; and explained the value of the State College of Agriculture to country boys.

The ten boys and ten girls who had made the best general record had all expenses paid for attending the short course of the State College of Agriculture at Ames.

No More "Sittin' 'Round"

Coryell County, Texas, held a field day with speeches, races, basket ball, volley ball, a bacon fry dinner and an organization meeting, which formed the Girls' Athletic Association, with the motto "One thousand girls in outdoor games in Coryell County." "There'll not be any more sittin' around at recess now," said one of the members. Later the county was divided into twenty districts with a director in each. The Association rest room is becoming a community center, where teas and corn poppings are held, from which a traveling library reaches to the country about, where the "Exchange Recipe Department" has headquarters, and where the girls can rest, eat lunch and read.

In Lake Forest, Illinois, one of the schools lent its grounds for basket ball, tennis, and other games in pleasant weather and the big assembly room for folk dancing on rainy days. The college swimming pool was kept open through the summer with a charge only for janitor service and water.

In Highland Park, Illinois, the Association "rooms" consists of one big store room, with curtains making a reading room, gymnasium, and kitchen. In summer, academy grounds are used for tennis, when the students are away.

In the Highways and Hedges

Chautauqua County, New York, has endeavored to meet the needs of the girl workers in the vineyards by providing special gayeties during the season when many girls away from home find themselves with nothing to do in the evening. Members of the

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committee went up and down the main street, inviting the girls into the Association rooms for a frolic. Games, both energetic and quiet, folk dancing, and singing fill up the evening.

The Liberty Club of Chautauqua County, New York, made up of twenty-two little Italian girls, has a large celluloid doll for which they made a complete outfit, receiving incidentally lessons in bathing and caring for their baby.

Lakewood, New Jersey, kept open house in the Association gymnasium two evenings a week through the summer and conducted a swimming class in a small lake for years used exclusively by boys. A small bath house was erected and about fifty girls and women taught to swim.

Reaching Out for Help

A Mother Goose Operetta with one hundred and twenty-five participants was written and directed by an Association worker, in Greene County, Ohio, with the result of socializing the village. One booth at the county fair in this same county was given over to a table perfectly set for dinner. Beside it was an exhibit of canning and baking by a class of high school girls. An athletic carnival included races in the streets to rouse the spectators to the need of an athletic field. In the parade which opened this carnival, a squadron of small girls wheeling decorated doll carriages received much applause.

In Greene County, too, an abandoned hotel, rented for a small sum, repaired, and simply furnished has formed a social center. A girls' summer camp was conducted in conjunction with a Chautauqua, at a cost of \$6.35, for each girl for seventy-four days.

Fifteen young women in a rural district in Minnesota, studied civic problems of cities, such as The Consumers' League, social settlements, the American Red Cross Society, the National Playground Association.

The Y. M. C. A. bowling alleys are reserved for the use of girls one afternoon each week in Westfield, New York.

In Nebraska housekeepers in a district where the schools have no facilities for domestic science training, give instruction in their own homes to groups of high school girls.

Delightful Winter Evenings

Much can be done to make the long winter evenings delights and golden memories as well as to weld the family together, through a family habit of reading aloud. Mrs. Martha Van Rensselaer

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would advocate reading things worth while with a suggestion of interest for all, rather than "reading down" to the younger members of the family. "The boy may not understand all of 'Marmion' but he catches the fire and spirit of it. There is a larger amount of sympathy between the mother and daughter who wash the dishes and read 'The Lady of the Lake' together than between the mother who washes the dishes and the daughter who reads 'The Lady of the Lake' alone.

"Take turns reading aloud. Let your neighbors know you keep open house that evening, if they care to drop in. As soon as the boy or girl expresses a desire for a book on any practical or rural subject, provide it. If one of the children likes poultry, buy a poultry book. You may need one on birds or gardening or trees or horses or pets."

As the best thought of the community is turned toward problems of recreation, many excellent and very practicable suggestions are made. The idea that where a group of young people in the rural community has been in the habit of having dances at a place near which liquor could be bought, and where these dances have been in bad repute because of this and of careless conduct, a woman who is respected and is popular socially with the young people engages that hall for an evening and invites the young people to a dancing party of her own, provides good music, and invites older people, either to act as chaperons or to take part in the dancing, was taken up by a group of girls who conducted exceedingly successful parties. New steps and folk dances were taught, proper position in dancing insisted upon, and occasion taken to drop remarks as to the customs of polite society in the ball room.

A Village Dance

The same suggestion solved a serious problem which confronted the leaders of the Girls' Friendly Society of a small college town in New England. The Society is made up of a mixed membership but many are girls who work in nearby mills. They had no form of organized amusement and the fact that the town was full of students from the colleges, made the situation fraught with much danger. The use of a small hall was secured gratis. The services of a teacher of aesthetic and folk dancing was obtained at a reasonable figure and a dance was held every Saturday night. To give the affair an interest apart from the too often disastrous college element, the leader, who by the way was the wife of one of the college profes-

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sors, talked with the girls, saying that as the college students had so much social life, wouldn't it be nice to keep this dance for the town boys who did not have much in the way of good times. The idea took and although there was some awkwardness on the part of the village boys at first they soon liked it as well as the girls.

Some of the leading people of the town, among them several of the professors and their wives, were interested in making a success of the project and a number not only acted as chaperons each evening but even joined in the dances. There was usually an attendance of from fifty to sixty and the young people had grand good times. Thus the girls were given something to think of besides walking the streets and hanging around corners to catch the attention of the college boys.

Dr. Paul W. Goldsbury was moved by a village pageant of Warwick, Massachusetts, to suggest the use of the country hotel as a social center. He thinks a "country club" might properly be a place for city and country men to meet with mutual profit, and no place certainly is more logical for such a purpose than the "inn."

Mr. C. D. Chichester, Mount Kisco, New York, has a novel idea for rural recreation:

"When a boy I lived in a small village in the western part of our State, and the gang stumbled on an amusement for evenings, (especially good for cold weather) that proved to be a success. I use the word stumbled, for I do not remember that any older person made the suggestion. The boys were notified to meet in the evening at the home of a poor old woman, bringing saws and axes. Perhaps fifteen boys were on hand, and we attacked the old lady's woodpile, which was speedily reduced to stove-wood size. The racket while operations were going on was quite sufficient to rejoice the heart of the most ambitious of our crowd, and the evening's work (or play) was so satisfactory that other homes were visited on different nights. We were doing something for a needy person and found plenty of good exercise—both worth while."

The Country Life Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, Spokane, Washington, has suggested a country life hall, which should be in the center of every consolidated school district, to be used for all sorts of community meetings and social gatherings—a real community center, owned by the people or the government, with a salaried secretary.

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Another valuable suggestion comes from Liberty H. Bailey, Dean of Cornell Agricultural College, who says:

A Home Playground on the Farm

"My suggestion is that on every farm there should be a piece of land definitely set aside for the children and the young folk, to be used for the purpose of developing intellectual interest in the farm and in country life. This might be a half-acre or an acre near the house and the barns, permanently set aside and perhaps enclosed with rows of trees and bushes and effective planting of flowers. In this area many kinds of tests and demonstrations could be made. Here new varieties could be tried; fertilizers in a small way could be demonstrated; spraying could be studied; different methods of planting and of tilling and of growing could be illustrated; small breeding-plots could be established; bird-houses could be erected; perhaps a small fish-pond could be established; and many other tests could be made. It could be made a proving-yard and collecting-yard for the various problems that arise in the course of the farm work which the children would be interested on their own account to try out.

"It should be just as much a part of a farm establishment to provide such a side-lot as to erect a milk-house or carriage-shed, a clothes-yard, a well-house, chicken-yard, or any other accessory of the farm.

Should Be a Part of the School System

"I should incorporate this yard into the school system of the district. Now that we are to have a new method of supervision for country schools, with an agricultural qualification for the district superintendents, I should like to see the effort made by these overseers to establish such a demonstration area on every farm in the districts or, at all events, on every farm on which there are children. The teacher in every school should have a list or a map of these test-yards, and should set the children problems that are to be worked out in them; and from these yards reports would go back to the school. Exhibitions could be held at different times, and the school could be provided with flowers and with specimens for study. When the school is let out in the afternoon the children usually drop the school work as soon as possible; my purpose is to encourage them to take the school-thought with them and to plant it in the garden.

FAIR AND FIELD DAY

Most Interesting Part of the Farm

"A garden-yard of this kind would become an out door room in which all kinds of interesting things would in time be collected.

It could work out problems with the children and set many new ideas going in every country district. It would soon become the most interesting nook on the farm. At a recent meeting of farmers I was asked what could be done to interest the young people in the club. I replied that every member of the club ought first to interest the children intellectually in the farm, and that this could be done through a home school-garden of the kind that I have here suggested; and I said that if I visited the club a year hence I should ask for a show of hands as to how many had actually set aside such an area. The children are the most important product of the farm and they should be given encouragement and facilities on the farm itself, to become familiar with the simple farm problems, and to have their minds opened to many new things that would hold their sympathy and affection.

Must Plan Consciously for Children

"My contention is that the farmer can by no means escape his responsibility in the development of a better country life. He must express this responsibility largely in the better education and training of his children. He cannot expect to educate his children effectively unless he has an establishment for the purpose."

For some time, Miss Bertha Freeman was on the staff of the Playground and Recreation Association of America, as a special worker in rural communities of New York State and New England. Extracts from some of her reports may serve to show some of the typical experiments in rural recreation carried on in this district.

THE STAFFORDVILLE JUNIOR FAIR AND FIELD DAY*

In the modest "parlor" of the lady minister's home forty boys and girls were gathered and waiting for seed and instructions for their garden tests. The chances were they would have to wait, for it was spring, the roads were muddy over the seven miles which the

*From reports of Bertha Freeman, formerly Assistant, Playground and Recreation Association of America, New York City

FAIR AND FIELD DAY

devoted agriculturist must take to reach them, and the devoted agriculturist's horse was well known throughout the town for his mild hesitation. Finally, however, he brought his master, with government seeds and a fund of expert knowledge. Seeds were distributed, instructions given, plans made for consultation by telephone or mail if things went wrong, and hints were given of a possible exhibit to be held at harvest time, with prizes and fame for successful junior gardeners.

Some idea of how the boys and girls worked, and waited, and watched those gardens, and of how the fathers and mothers aided, could be gathered from the talk at "the store" or at church on Sundays. As the summer drew to a close an association was formed to arrange for the exhibit, with the devoted agriculturist as president, the lady minister as secretary*, the school teachers on committees with other citizens old and young.

The Great Day

On Saturday afternoon, September 28, 1912, was held the second annual Junior Fair and Field Day of Staffordville, Connecticut. On the village green, which is a tiny triangle with roads on the two long sides, at the upper end, near the general store, tables were spread with the harvest—potatoes, corn, pumpkins, squashes, beets, apples, pears, grapes. Every youthful exhibitor got at least one premium. Some received as much as \$3.75; some only five cents. One girl and thirteen boys, among their other achievements, carried to a successful result five potato tests. Some older farmers, too, brought unique products for exhibition.

At the lower end, on the point of the triangle, was a table well filled and tastefully arranged with flowers which nearly a score of girls had raised from seeds or tubers. Here, too, each exhibitor received an award for the summer's effort.

Between these exhibits, under the spreading maples, the space was reserved for folk dancing and athletic events. The five hundred people were grouped in the yards across the roads on either side and on the piazza of the store. When the prizes had all been awarded, the school children gave the salute to the flag, and "America" was sung by the crowd. Then a friend of the lady minister, who was visiting in the village, told how she had been to the schoolhouse each day at recess playing games with the children and teaching some of the simple folk dances,—as a result of which about thirty girls and eight tiny people—boys and girls—were

A VILLAGE AWAKENED

prepared to dance for their own delight and the pleasure of their friends. She told how the folk dances came to us from the old countries where they were danced on the village green by all the people, not merely by the children, and she explained the significance of each dance as it was given. The children were dressed in white, each group wearing a different colored cheesecloth sash over the shoulder and tied under the opposite arm. At a signal the girls skipped across the road to the green, took their places, and executed their dance, and then skipped off again. An organ on a platform played by the school teacher furnished music. Fourteen small girls gave the "Dance of Greeting," sixteen larger girls the "Shoemaker's," eight little boys and girls "Hickory, Dickory Dock," and two girls "Ace of Diamonds."

Then came the boys' fun, for a college athlete from a neighboring village had come over to run off all kinds of athletic tests of skill and strength.

About thirty dollars in prizes were distributed to the junior gardeners,—the money having been given by interested friends from far and near,—and almost every boy went home with a ribbon "first, second, or third," won by his athletic prowess.

But Not the Last After it was all over and the automobiles, and carriages, and bicycles had carried away the visitors—for this little village is five miles from railroad and trolley—all the exhibitors, agriculturists, horticulturists, dancers, and athletes, tired but happy, "cleaned up." They declared the Staffordville Junior Fair and Field Day had come to stay, and plans were heard of a larger field, a village band, and more folk dancing and athletics as a part of the regular school activities.

A VILLAGE AWAKENED*

A small New England village, rich in Revolutionary history, with the frequent experience of a change from agricultural to manufacturing interests, an exodus of the young people, especially young men, the people separated into classes based upon differences in religion, social standing, and economic conditions, wakened to the fact that the young people remaining had been

*From reports of Bertha Freeman, formerly Assistant, Playground and Recreation Association of America, New York City

A VILLAGE AWAKENED

trusted to adapt themselves to such changed conditions without aid or consciousness of the problems on the part of those who ought to have helped and might have done so. Conditions were pretty hopeless, especially as there seemed no possible way to unite the residents for the purpose of improving conditions. One thoughtful young woman suggested a pageant based upon the history of the town. The resulting unity of feeling made recreation of some sort a natural second step for the permanent welfare.

One Open Door

All the recreation facilities existing were either directly or indirectly controlled by special or sectarian interests so that they could not be regarded as means of public recreation. As notable exceptions to these were the playground, the library, and the board of trade,—the playground free to all children under fourteen, but for only two months; the library, already becoming a center to which all the people of the village had access without regard to age, race, creed, or social position; the board of trade, recently organized, a medium through which all the citizens might express their interest in civic affairs.

In the graded school there was no physical training, no organized athletics, no societies among the students for physical, literary, or social purposes, and in connection with the school no parent-teachers' association. In the high school the boys had flourishing baseball and football teams, under the supervision of the principal. The girls had no organizations whatever. Apparently no interest had been shown in the way they spent their leisure time, except to criticize.

Curiously enough, no organized efforts appeared to have been made to reach any considerable number of the young people between fourteen and twenty-one years of age, especially the young girls whose days were spent in the mills and for whom some form of recreation in the evening hours is necessary to relieve the strain of their long day. Great numbers of young girls were seen walking up and down the streets at night with apparently nothing to do and nowhere to go. Worse yet, the citizens stated that there was immorality among the young people. It is hard to get at definite facts in this regard, but the statements of physicians, school teachers, mill workers, church workers, and almsgivers indicated that the moral tone of the young people was not so high as it ought to be. "If this condition has arisen because of the lack of occupation and amusement which formerly existed in the

A VILLAGE AWAKENED

home," said the thoughtful ones, "and if the parents have not arisen to the occasion, it becomes the duty of the community, in self-defense, if for no other reason, to provide recreation which shall keep these young people busy and happy and so out of mischief. It will be a good investment of money and effort if by such means we can turn our young people from evil tendencies and make them useful citizens." A good argument for recreation as a means of lifting people out of the miseries caused by lack of moral tone was found in the statement of a saloon keeper of the village to the effect that the moving picture shows had been detrimental to his business; a good argument for recreation as a means of interesting the young people of the village was found in the crowds at the three Saturday night dances and at the two moving picture shows, which, unfortunately, were accompanied by bad vaudeville.

Attraction for All As a means of meeting this need of public recreation, a trained and experienced recreation secretary was employed to work under the recreation committee of the board of trade, to organize play and games for all ages both winter and summer. The library, in a part of the town where all the people go some time during the day, was selected as the recreation center, as a room on the first floor could be fitted up as a game room, where the girls spending their leisure on the street could have a warm comfortable place to dance and play and entertain their young men friends; and a hall for lectures and other entertainments and for a gymnasium was available in the building. Besides this, a lot in the rear could be secured for outdoor amusements.

To this end the town has voted five hundred dollars, with the understanding that the citizens shall subscribe a like amount, or as much more as may be needed, to employ a recreation secretary to carry out the plan outlined, or help the citizens in devising a better one.

This village is determined to restore to its youth that vigor of health which belongs with its rugged hills, that joy of living which belongs with its bubbling brooks, that beauty of character which belongs with its glorious past. This is its "vision of hope."

A SOCIAL SERVICE LEAGUE*

A year or so ago there was organized in Salisbury, Connecticut, a Social Service League. The nucleus of its membership was a group of five people,—among them two physicians and one energetic, public-spirited woman who were charter members of the Connecticut Social Hygiene Association and were much concerned over the moral conditions in the town. They took as their motto "More and better work and play for our children" and later changed it to "More and better work and play for all." The woman member went about among the homes and explained the purposes of the organization, and secured as members fathers, mothers and children. Subscriptions were asked of those who wished to give, but there were no membership dues. Some rather large subscriptions were given by wealthy families who live in the town part of the year and a considerable sum was raised by means of a summer tea room where the women took their turns at serving. Thus some who could not give in money were able to give in work. The tea room was in a large cool hall in the library building on the main thoroughfare, and secured an excellent automobile trade.

The league employed as social worker a young woman with normal and college training who had also taken manual training courses and was thoroughly acquainted with the problems of rural life.

Clubs for All

The first effort was to get the consent of the school board to allow the use of school property—usually the basement—for carpentry classes for boys and cooking and sewing classes for the girls, and its consent also for certain grades to have assigned one or two periods a week for manual training.

Through the interest aroused by the social worker among the women of the town, several girls' clubs were formed and led by the women,—small clubs of six or seven girls each, for travel study, for play, for dramatics, for creating interest in good reading, and so on. One club leader said her ideal was to make the girls "a little more honest, a little more gentle, a little more purposeful."

The sewing class held on Saturday morning was open to all girls from the tiniest to those of ten and twelve years old, super-

*From reports of Bertha Freeman, formerly Assistant, Playground and Recreation Association of America, New York City

A SOCIAL SERVICE LEAGUE

vised by the social worker, with several young women volunteer assistants.

The town is composed of five villages. In all of these except one where club work was already being carried on by the people of the neighborhood, the social worker organized manual training classes and boys' and girls' clubs, as the occasion seemed to demand. In one of the villages which had no railroad connection with the others, the people were so anxious for her services that they sent a carriage for her, entertained her over night, and she, realizing their zeal, voluntarily gave up her evening for their classes.

Home Gardens

The manual training classes were closed with an exhibition, in April, and after the Easter vacation children's gardens were begun. There was to be a central garden at the schoolhouse in each village where the social worker should teach the children to plant and care for their plots. The children were encouraged to start their own gardens at home. The grange offered to inspect the individual plots through the two summer months when the social worker should be away and also offered prizes for the harvest. The club leaders expressed a willingness to keep up the girls' and boys' clubs through the summer, if the members wished—and the members, when consulted, most decidedly did so wish. The plan was to have as many out-of-door activities as possible,—nature walks, games, picnics.

A folk-dancing teacher was engaged to spend Saturday in one of the villages and hold two classes,—one for adults and one for children. The charge for lessons was to be low, on the understanding that the members of these classes should in turn instruct others in their respective villages, in the hope that folk dancing might become the popular diversion of the people during the vacation months.

An institute for the public school teachers was contemplated for June and July when certain normal instruction should be given in manual training, so that the teachers could supplement the activities of the social worker and perhaps carry it on if the time came when the school board should make it a part of the regular school work, and in games so that they could act as play leaders at recess.

A townswoman offered to provide the services of an expert carpenter to teach the young men who were idling their time away

ACCUMULATED FOR ONE HUNDRED YEARS

on the street corner, and promised to buy all the chicken-houses they would make for her poultry farm. It was proposed that in addition to chicken-houses they be taught to make parallel bars and some other simple gymnastic apparatus, to be set up in a vacant lot near the post-office, for their own use summer evenings.

Seventy Volunteers One of the best things about the social worker's efforts was that she had the names of about seventy people, men and women, who were willing to be called upon for volunteer service in connection with the work of the Social Service League, and in the course of the first eight months of her work in the town they had all actually performed some service under the direction of the League.

In addition to the efforts of the Social Service League, the high school principal organized athletic clubs among the boys and was active with others in forming a boys' club in one of the villages which has the use of the Men's Club rooms one evening a week and Saturday afternoon.

This Men's Club has rooms fitted up over a store—room for smoking, for games, for reading, and an auditorium with windows and lights screened in order to allow basket ball. Their open meetings are held in the assembly of the high school.

The townspeople are uniting to overcome what is unworthy in their town. They expect this to come about through "Better work and play for all."

ACCUMULATED FOR ONE HUNDRED YEARS*

A century ago, when the town and the parish of Goshen, Massachusetts, were one, a lover of his hill village left a legacy of one hundred dollars to be allowed to accumulate for one hundred years, then to be spent for a building for the use of the public.

The fund, left at compound interest, had grown to a considerable amount when the Civil War broke out. At that time, the town and the church having long since been separated, the town borrowed heavily from the fund in an endeavor to keep its boys at home and to pay for their substitutes at the front. Financial complications thereby arose which, at the end of the hundred

*From reports of Bertha Freeman, formerly Assistant, Playground and Recreation Association of America, New York City.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN NEW YORK

years, made it necessary to have appointed a board of arbitration to determine how much of the original and accumulated funds belonged to the present church and how much to the present town. It was finally found that, because of the breaking into the fund and the failure to pay interest, or to repay the loans, only nine thousand dollars approximately was available with which to carry out the terms of the bequest. Plans were made, however, for a town building that should cost fifteen thousand dollars, and descendants of the original donor made up the balance. Public-spirited citizens gave the site.

Clean Wholesome Fun Provided

The building is now used for the library, the parish church, and town offices; it also contains a large hall used for entertainments, dances and other town meetings. Often over one hundred people, young and old, of all classes of society are seen at the dances. The fame of these dances for clean, wholesome fun has spread, so that people come from the towns for miles around. No liquor is to be had in the neighborhood, nor would anyone be tolerated who under the influence of drink sought admittance. The young men of the town make the arrangements and pay the expenses of light, heat and music out of the collection taken at the parties. From the small amounts left over from the dance collections, and from proceeds of other entertainments the young people have earned the piano.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES CARRIED ON IN A SMALL COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK*

The community in question has about 2,250 inhabitants. It is a railroad center, there being four roads which pass through it. There is a memorial building, containing gymnasium, reading room and other equipment, which was given to the village well-endowed and which aims to be the center of the recreational activities of the place. This is conducted on a non-sectarian basis and has a paid secretary and physical director. A certain latent interest in the building is manifest because of the fact that it was given to the village and citizens had nothing to do

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RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN NEW YORK

with the furnishing of the funds for its erection. Moreover, they feel that the endowment ought to yield sufficient funds for anything that might be carried on. There is a \$5.00 membership fee for adults who belong to the building.

The following are the various forms of recreational activities carried on in the village:

Boy Scouts The Community Recreation Building has furnished a place for the boy scouts to meet. There are eighteen members, two patrols, and four first-class scouts. The organization is active and unusually flourishing. They conduct a summer camp, but have undertaken no unusual activities outside of the manual. There is no other boys' club work, with the exception of the Brotherhood at the Lutheran Church. Some boys belong to both organizations.

Tennis Courts The Building has two tennis courts which are constantly used all summer and up to the middle of September by boys and girls with equal privileges.

Dramatic Work Plays given by the people of the village always bring out the greatest crowds and the most enthusiasm. It has always been a town custom to have such entertainments and there are several persons who can be counted upon to carry them through. The Circus, in which 75 took part and which was attended by over 500, last year was a great event. A May festival on private grounds was prepared last spring by the woman physical director. Those taking part in it were mostly children.

Tramping Trips Tramping seems to be a habit with the people. Groups of boys and other classes of people as well go off Sunday afternoons over the hills. There is, however, no organized walking club. There is no nature study work except that connected with the activities of the boy scouts.

County Fair There is a county fair held here which is of the usual objectionable kind, though some effort was made last fall toward cleaning it up and some places on the midway were closed.

Debating Clubs The Building has a debating club made up of young men from fifteen to thirty years of age. They discuss timely topics. There are about fourteen members, including both Building secretaries. The leader is an Armenian, graduate of Cornell.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN NEW YORK

Coasting and Skating

The best coasting place is very dangerous and the Building is planning for police protection or the building of another coast. There is no pond for skating but it has been suggested that the tennis court be flooded.

Recreation for Women

Last year there was a gymnasium class of women above high school age, with a membership of from thirty to thirty-five. About half were young, half middle-aged. Folk dancing is possible as yet only as a gymnasium class activity. Since the town has voted against a generous offer of the State to introduce domestic science, it is not thought wise for the Building to provide facilities at least at present, although many women feel the need of it for their own and other people's daughters.

Musical Clubs

There is a mandolin club and the forming of a choral club is being discussed.

Directed Play at School

There is no directed play at school but this is much needed. The high school has baseball and foot-ball teams which are accompanied on out of town trips by the principal.

Athletic Leagues

There is a Sunday school athletic league from which, however, one Sunday school has bolted on account of narrow prejudice against the Building and for other reasons. The boys are distressed and talk of leaving the Sunday school to join the other. This is one of the problems at present.

Agricultural Meetings

A poultry association has had the use of the Building for several meetings. Attempts at other agricultural meetings have failed to bring co-operation or attendance. The impression is that since Nature has been lavish here and natural resources are not exhausted, the farmers feel no need to learn scientific methods. They have little interest in "book learning," as they call it.

Not much has been accomplished toward reaching the out lying country. The Building physical director is being allowed to give one day a week to hold gymnasium classes. Eventually it is the hope of the Building to cover the surrounding agricultural district. A step in this direction is a suggestion of a farmers' membership, so that farmers' families when they come to shop in the village may have the use of the Building.

THE COUNTRY BOY

Commercial Recreation

The hotel which has a bar, is used also as a theatre, and for moving picture shows and dances. It is not a desirable place. Young children are let into the moving picture shows free when the program is half over,—a violation of the law. It is said that systematic efforts are made for the patronage of the bar among those who go there for other purposes. A pool room, largely patronized by railroad men, is near a saloon. It costs more to play pool there than at the Building. Treating and betting are the usual order. There is no bowling excepting at the Building. A public dancing class has had to go out of business since dancing was allowed at the Building.

The Grange

The grange has a membership of about 200 but is not very active. Ten years ago there were perhaps 100 people at the meetings, mostly village people, and the meetings were largely of a social nature. Farmers have not been interested largely. There has been no particular co-operation between the grange and the Building. The grange meets in its own hall.

Storytelling

Little has been done in the way of storytelling. At the Building on some winter evenings the lights are turned low and all sit around the open fire while stories of outdoor and camp life are told.

It is hoped to make the Building the center not only of the village but also of the rural life of that section. The community is, however, conservative and progress has been slow.

THE COUNTRY BOY*

GEORGE E. JOHNSON

Professor of Play, School of Philanthropy, New York City

There are some things vitally essential to successful childhood, successful boyhood and girlhood, or successful youth. Failing these, by so much they fail of becoming full men and women.

Time for Free, Large Movements

When the years of babyhood are passed, and the child has reached school age, more room and more toys and apparatus are needed. These children of five, six, and seven years of age are at

*Published by permission of the Massachusetts Civic League from Leaflet No. 8

THE COUNTRY BOY

the height of interest in free, active plays. There must be the opportunity for large, free movements, for full exploitation of bodily control and use of the senses. The child needs to run, roll, climb, dig, drag, lift, push, and pull in order to properly develop the muscular system and the nervous system which controls it. Moreover, at this time appear peculiar phases of the constructive, imitative nature, collecting and hoarding, dramatic and musical interests, which have an important bearing on later efficiency in these lines.

There must be the chance for sand-pile construction, sewing plays, cooking plays, housekeeping plays, doll plays, collecting and hoarding of common objects, dramatic imitation of the occupations and social customs of adults. The environment of country villages and the homes of the poor fail to supply all that is needed along these lines. Playgrounds and leaders in play work are as essential here as are the school-rooms.

More Venturesome Play

Children of seven, eight, and nine years of age are beginning to play games and to require more space for play. Many of the favorite games of this age—as, for example, hide-and-seek, tag, drop-the-handkerchief, hopscotch, and simple ball games—may be played in vacant lots, in the larger dooryards, or at the corners of the streets; but the playing of such games is greatly encouraged and the dangers greatly lessened through the provision of a playground. But there is a much greater need of playgrounds for country children of these ages for other reasons. The free plays of the earlier years are continuing, on a larger, more venturesome scale. Passion for nature, which lies in every normal child's breast at this age, impels him to press beyond his former narrow bounds. He must search the earth and appropriate what he finds. It is the beginning of the apple-stealing period. This passion for nature, if rightly guided, will lead to a higher and better appreciation of the world and of his own relation to it. But this passion needs direction, needs a headquarters for information and inspiration. Only rarely is such furnished the country boy, who, therefore, often remains impoverished amidst incalculable wealth and opportunity. The country playground can easily provide a "backyard fish-pond," aquarium, insect cages, aviary, and menagerie, which would furnish more information, interesting study, and incentive to look for things, probably, than the city

THE COUNTRY BOY

park and menagerie can furnish city children, because the former fall directly in the line of the child's activities and experience, and because they are largely of his own creation. But, without these aids and wise direction of the passion for nature, the vast majority of village boys miss entirely the scientific interest, loving appreciation, and moral inspiration that ought to result from contact with nature. The passion for nature finds expression in seeking, maiming, killing, destroying. Wild flowers are greedily and ruthlessly gathered, creatures are chased and slaughtered, in a kind of impetuous savagery. It is so easy to change all this. Dr. Hodge's experience with Worcester children in the matter of toad killing is a notable illustration. In "Nature Study and Life" he says:

"While walking once around a small pond, I counted two hundred toads dead or mangled and struggling in the water, and learned next day that two boys had killed three hundred more, carrying them off in an old milk-can to empty on a man's doorstep. This five hundred does not represent probably one-tenth of the number killed by the children that spring (1897) around this one pond. A 'civilization' in which such abuses of nature are possible ought to be eaten alive by insects, and something must be fundamentally wrong with a system of public education that does not render such a thing impossible. My first impulse was to get a law passed and appeal to the police; but the wiser counsel of a friend prevailed, and I was induced to try education of the children instead. Accordingly a prize of \$10 was offered to the Worcester school-child who would make the best practical study of the 'Value of the Common Toad!' This was offered March 31, 1898, and there was no evidence that a single toad was harmed at the pond the following April and May. I would have been well satisfied, had such a result been attained in five years. The fact that it came within thirty days reveals the possibility of nature study when united to human interest."

Tough Little Indians

The problem of the playground changes when we come to consider children of ten, eleven, and twelve years of age. Boys and girls cannot now so well be handled together. There must be a little more room for the games of this period. Genuine games must and will be played. These boys think less and care less about grown-up people than at any other time in their lives. They are

ROOSEVELT ON RURAL RECREATION

tough little Indians, each bent on showing his own personal prowess. When they get together in unrestrained freedom and enter upon some of their games, one does not always enjoy their manners and their speech. It is a moral lesson of no mean significance when these boys learn on a "playground" to play even better ball than before and without making the air blue. I am constrained to believe that country boys are more prone, if anything, to the evils of games than city boys.

The country playground offers a fine opportunity in the matter of gardening. It is a mistake to suppose that the children of the villages know all about gardening. Very many country children have little to do with flowers or with vegetable gardens. Certainly, the great majority of them are not well instructed in these dear delights of the initiated. The public schools, in some few towns, are beginning to do something along this line, but not very much. The public school is handicapped because it can scarcely bring its instruction to a joyful fruition. The gardens are frequently abandoned at the close of school, and the children reap small reward for their labor in vegetables at least. The playground could very successfully remedy this difficulty.*

ROOSEVELT ON RURAL RECREATION

Oyster Bay, N. Y., August 7th, 1914

My dear MR. CURTIS:

I appreciate your having sent me your book on Play and Recreation for the Open Country. I most cordially agree with you in the purpose of your work. The men who live in the open country must be in the future, as they have been in the past, the backbone of this nation, or we have evil times ahead of us. The country must restore and readjust the old-time conditions, and at the same time develop them to meet the new needs. Wealth in the sense of material wellbeing must be the foundation of life in the country as in the city, for unless men make enough money or its equivalent to keep themselves and their families in comfort, they will be remiss in their duty to their families and will be a drag on the community. But material wellbeing is only the

*How these theories were worked out in detail in a rural town in Massachusetts is told in 'Education by Play and Games' by the same author.—Editor

RECREATION IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

foundation, and it is worthless without the superstructure of life and love and happiness which means joy in life. The spirit of play must come into rural life as having its full place beside the spirit of work. The children should be treated not as a by-product of the farm, but as the object for which the farm exists. The country school must be organized so as to be once more, and more than ever, a social center; nor must we forget the place that the country church can play.

I wish you all luck in what you are striving to do.

Faithfully yours,

(signed) THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Mr. Henry S. Curtis,
Care of Messrs. Ginn & Co.,
New York

RECREATION IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

A recreation survey of Springfield, Illinois, made by Lee F. Hanmer and Clarence A. Perry, as part of a city survey made by the Russell Sage Foundation at the request of a local survey committee, puts into facts and figures conditions known to recreation workers as typical of many cities besides Springfield, Illinois.

Springfield is a city of homes; it practically has no congestion problem. Almost every house out of the down-town district has a yard, and the apartment house has just begun to appear. Over eighty percent of the population are white and of native birth. The school yards average 2.33 acres per school, about 231 square feet of free space for each pupil.

Surely no question of play or play-space here! Yet the investigators found that over forty percent of the high school boys and thirty percent of the girls attend the moving picture shows seven or eight times a month. Home parties for the boys and girls were few. Baseball, reading, and kite-flying were the only activities reported by over twenty percent of the boys. Prisoners' base, leap frog, blind man's buff, bull in the ring, hare and hound, duck on the rock, are played by less than half of one percent of the grammar school boys. Most of these games were mentioned by only one-tenth of one percent or about one in a thousand. There was no department of physical training in the

INSTITUTE IN PLAY AND RECREATION

schools, the buildings were not available for use in the evenings, or for social activities more than once in nine or ten weeks, and dancing was not allowed.

As soon as the conditions were pointed out to the community, however, immediate steps were taken to remedy them. Already a department of physical training and play has been added to the schools and the other recommendations of the investigators are being considered—the purchase of a public schools athletic field, co-operation between the board of education and the park board in the utilization of park playgrounds and a system of school social centers maintained by the board of education and the parent-teacher associations.

INSTITUTE IN PLAY AND RECREATION

GEORGE ELLSWORTH JOHNSON, Conductor

To be held February 1-20, 1915, at The New York School of Philanthropy,
Edward T. Devine, Director, 105 East Twenty-second street,
New York City

Institute in Play and Recreation

At this Institute will be discussed the chief problems that confront workers in the field—such as appropriations, playground construction, equipment, administration, activities, selection of leaders, training of leaders while in the work, neighborhood organization, use of school plants, clubs, commercialized recreation, dancing, recreation in rural communities. The discussions will be led by persons who are dealing with these problems at first hand.

Meeting and conferring with these persons, and talking over with other workers in the field the problems, many of which are now in the first process of solution, will make for breadth of view, professional comradeship, understanding and courage.

Membership

The Institute is planned to meet the needs of those actually engaged in play and recreation work—such as superintendents of play and recreation systems, secretaries of play and recreation associations or commissions, and supervisors and directors of play and recreation centers.

FENCING ON THE PLAYGROUND

New York City as Institute Center

The City of New York is an advantageous center for such an Institute, offering an unequaled field for observation. Here are represented nearly every phase of play and recreation problems in acute form and also the greatest variety of agencies attempting to meet these problems. It is a field of almost infinite suggestion to the student of play. Excursions are carefully planned, and many of the most interesting and suggestive play and recreation centers are visited.

The underlying principles of play and recreation work are also carefully considered and the methods of carrying such principles into the practical field are outlined.

Members of the Institute are requested to send in advance suggestions of topics in which they are especially interested, and to come prepared to give and take in the discussions. The only charge made is a registration fee of \$10.00.

FENCING ON THE PLAYGROUND

Several have suggested that we ought to have rules which should be carefully followed for fencing on playgrounds. A number of bad accidents have occurred because the proper safeguards have not been taken. In *THE PLAYGROUND* for September, 1914, a picture of boys fencing was shown which, though the best picture the Association has, ought not to have been published because these boys were fencing without plastrons.

Mr. Gustavus T. Kirby suggests that the danger from fencing on the playgrounds is greater than the benefit to be derived, that one reason why we do not have more efficient American fencers is that most of the boys start wrong and in that way contract habits which it is impossible to eliminate when a real master with accurate knowledge takes them in hand.

Many will be helped if readers of *THE PLAYGROUND* will send word regarding any experience they have had with fencing on playgrounds.



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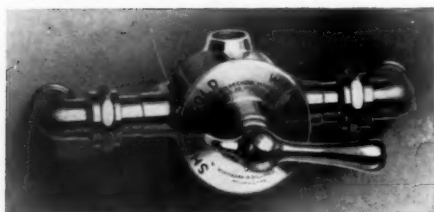
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The Playground represents and promotes the recreation interests of 30,000,000 children and young people, indoors and outdoors, throughout the year.

Do you have difficulty in securing adequate
MUNICIPAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR PLAYGROUNDS

If so—perhaps the recreation field secretaries

can help you—Write to

THE PLAYGROUND AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION

OF AMERICA

1 Madison Avenue, New York City

A LETTER WE SHOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE

Playground and Recreation Association of America
1 Madison Avenue
New York City

Gentlemen:

Judging from the past achievements of your Association \$50,000 spent annually in your field work should develop permanent publicly supported playgrounds and recreation systems for one million children and young people each year.

I have tried to think what an opportunity to play under normal conditions away from the city streets would mean to one million children and young people, and as I have thought of this I have determined to invest the yearly interest on one million dollars, using your Association as my agent in spending this yearly interest during one to ten years as I shall determine.

I do this in the hope that your 3500 other contributors may be stimulated to contribute even more largely. It ought not to be necessary for us to wait twenty-five years before giving each child in America an opportunity to play on a public playground

Sincerely yours,

AN INSPIRED MILLIONAIRE